



# Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*



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Director

November 25, 2014

TO: Esther L. Valadez, Chair  
Laura Shell, Vice Chair  
David W. Louie, Commissioner  
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner  
Pat Modugno, Commissioner

FROM: Connie Chung, AICP, Section Head  
General Plan Development and Housing Section

**SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE  
PUBLIC HEARING: PROJECT NO. 02-305 (1-5)  
December 10, 2014 – AGENDA ITEM #6**

## INTRODUCTION

The tenth public hearing on the General Plan Update series will take place on December 10, 2014. This hearing will summarize the previous hearings on the General Plan Update, additional edits to the Draft General Plan and its implementing documents, and the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The General Plan Update provides the policy framework to guide future development in the unincorporated areas. This effort is a comprehensive update to the existing General Plan, which was adopted in 1980.

## SCOPE OF THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

The General Plan Update encompasses the following components:

- Draft General Plan, which includes the following: Land Use Element; Mobility Element; Air Quality Element; Conservation and Natural Resources Element; Parks and Recreation Element; Noise Element; Safety Element; Public Services and Facilities Element; Economic Development Element; implementation programs; and figures and maps.
- Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP).
- Zone changes and amendments to Title 22, which includes the Hillside Management Areas (HMAs) Ordinance and implementing guidelines.<sup>1</sup>
- Final EIR.

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<sup>1</sup> The Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) Ordinance, which was proposed as part of the General Plan Update, was taken off-calendar at the October 8, 2014 public hearing. As a point of clarification, the updates to the descriptions of the SEAs, maps and associated goals and policies are still proposed as part of the Conservation and Natural Resources Element.

## **PUBLIC HEARING FORMAT**

The schedule below summarizes ten public hearings. The format of the public hearings was structured to facilitate the management of the content of the General Plan Update, and to allow the public to attend hearings that are of specific interest to them.

February 26, 2014	Introduction and Planning Areas Framework; Land Use Element; Mobility Element.
March 26, 2014	Air Quality Element; Conservation and Natural Resources Element; Parks and Recreation Element; Noise Element; Safety Element; Public Services and Facilities Element; and Economic Development Element.
April 23, 2014	Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) Program Update and SEA Ordinance, and HMA Ordinance.
May 28, 2014	Zone changes and amendments to Title 22.
June 25, 2014	Community Climate Action Plan.
July 23, 2014	Edits to the Draft General Plan.
August 6, 2014	SEA Program Update and SEA Ordinance, and HMA Ordinance.
August 27, 2014	Canceled, and items continued without discussion to October 8, 2014.
October 8, 2014	General Plan Update, including SEA Program Update and SEA Ordinance (SEA Ordinance was taken off calendar).
December 10, 2014	Recap and Final EIR.

## **DECEMBER 10, 2014 DISCUSSION TOPICS**

### **February 26, 2014 Public Hearing**

#### **General Plan Overview**

At the first public hearing on February 26, 2014, staff provided an overview of the General Plan Update, primarily on the Five Guiding Principles and Planning Area Framework. The Guiding Principles support the overarching goal of the General Plan, which is Sustainability. The Planning Areas Framework divides Los Angeles County into 11 areas to plan for the unique characteristics and needs of different communities in more systematic and efficient ways through future planning efforts.

#### **General Plan Elements**

The General Plan Elements identify countywide planning issues, as well as the goals, policies, and implementation programs to address those issues. At this public hearing, staff presented the Land Use Element and Mobility Element. Highlights include Transit Oriented Districts (TOD) in the Land Use Element, and policies that encourage active transportation and complete streets in the Mobility Element.

#### **Discussion**

Twenty individuals testified at the hearing. Highlights include: concerns regarding the impacts of the General Plan Update on rural communities; concerns over the implications of the SEA Program and its impact on various uses; support for policies related to military facilities and

operations. There were also inquiries on the impact of the General Plan on privately-owned properties and/or pending applications, the industrial preservation strategy outlined in the Land Use Element and Economic Development Element, and zoning consistency.

During discussion, staff was asked to consider adding a goal that supports the protection of rural communities. Staff was also directed to prepare a comment matrix that can be used to track comments received during the public hearing process. The General Plan Update was continued to March 26, 2014.

### **March 26, 2014 Public Hearing**

#### **General Plan Elements**

At the second public hearing on March 26, 2014, staff provided an overview of the Air Quality Element; Conservation and Natural Resources Element; Parks and Recreation Element; Noise Element; Safety Element; Public Services and Facilities Element; and Economic Development Element. Staff noted that the Community Climate Action Plan is a sub-element of the Air Quality Element. Staff also noted that the Conservation and Natural Resources Element includes discussions on SEAs, HMAs, and Agricultural Resource Areas. Furthermore, staff noted that in the Economic Development Element, Employment Protection Districts are identified to discourage the conversion of significant industrial lands to non-industrial uses.

#### **Discussion**

Representatives from the following County agencies testified in support of the General Plan Update: Department of Public Health, Department of Parks and Recreation, Community Development Commission, Chief Executive Office (CEO) Office of Child Care, and CEO Office of Emergency Management. In addition, ten individuals testified on the Regional Trails Systems Map and spoke in support of multi-user trails and regional connectivity, which are addressed in the Parks and Recreation Element.

During the discussion, staff was asked to consider adding goals to the Air Quality Element that address the minimization of dust as well as the preservation of mature trees and the planting of new trees in construction projects. Staff was also asked to consider adding a policy to encourage renewable energy. Staff was also asked to look into the possibilities of restricting mineral resources extraction, including fracking. Furthermore, staff was asked to update the County libraries figure in the Public Services and Facilities Element. The General Plan Update was continued to April 23, 2014.

### **April 23, 2014 Public Hearing**

At the third public hearing on April 23, 2014, staff provided an overview of the SEA Program, SEA Ordinance, and HMA Ordinance.

#### **SEA Program**

Staff provided an overview of the SEA Program, which is designed to maintain the balance between the use of land and protection of biological resources. Staff presented SEA Maps that illustrate new and expanded 21 SEA boundaries, and explained the program components, which also include the SEA Ordinance, including Development Map and the Connectivity and

Constriction Map; and SEA Program Guide. Staff indicated that the SEA Ordinance focuses on sensitive site design and permitting based on the location of projects and impacts on resources. Staff also discussed the Development Map and Connectivity and Constriction Map, which are maps associated with the Ordinance; and the SEA Program Guide, which provides additional resources and guidance.

### **HMA Ordinance**

Staff provided an overview of the HMA Ordinance, which addresses the impacts of development on hillsides. Staff highlighted permit requirements and findings as well as open space requirements for future projects in HMAs. Staff also discussed the implementing guidelines.

### **Discussion**

Ten individuals testified at the hearing. A majority of the testifiers expressed concerns over the SEA Ordinance, the expanded SEA boundaries, and the impacts of the SEA Program on mining operations.

The discussion included questions regarding the methodology used to develop the invasive plant list in the SEA Program Guide, as well as permit requirements for single family residences in the SEA Ordinance. For the HMA Ordinance, staff was asked to provide more information regarding the grading threshold that triggers HMA permit requirements; density calculations and whether the HMA Ordinance was in conflict with other existing regulations; and the definition of Improved Open Space. The discussion on the SEA Program Update, SEA Ordinance and HMA Ordinance was continued to June 25, 2014, and the remainder of the General Plan Update was continued to May 28, 2014.

## **May 28, 2014 Public Hearing**

### **Zoning Amendments and Zone Changes**

At the fourth public hearing on May 28, 2014, staff provided an overview of rezoning and amendments to Title 22 for zoning consistency with the General Plan Update. Staff indicated that approximately 4,500 parcels are proposed to be rezoned. These parcels were identified using two factors: 1) implementation of major policies in the General Plan, including TODs and EPDs; and 2) “clean-up” of the Zoning Map, where the Land Use designation, zoning and/or current uses of each property are inconsistent. Amendments to Title 22 include the creation of new zones, revisions to the Industrial Zones, and the elimination of unmapped zones and districts. Staff also explained outreach methodology, which targeted the affected property owners.

### **Discussion**

One individual spoke in opposition to the expansion of the SEA boundaries. Another individual spoke in support of the General Plan Update in allowing more opportunities to propose multi-family housing projects in the County.

The discussion focused on the feasibility of the high residential densities allowed by the draft Mixed Use Zone, as well as implications on infrastructure and non-conforming uses. The staff was asked to report back with more information on the draft Mixed Use Zone. The remainder of the General Plan Update was continued to June 25, 2014.

### **June 25, 2014 Public Hearing**

#### **Community Climate Action Plan**

At the fifth public hearing on June 25, 2014, staff and the County's consultant presented the CCAP, which establishes a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target that is consistent with state goals outlined in Assembly Bill 32; identifies new and existing measures to reach the reduction target; and streamlines the CEQA process for projects.

#### **Draft EIR**

On June 19, 2014, prior to the hearing, staff provided copies of the Draft EIR.

#### **Discussion**

One person spoke in support of the CCAP and recommended the incorporation of additional solar technologies and ways to increase energy efficiency. Staff was asked to ensure that those recommendations are addressed in the CCAP. The discussion on the SEA Program Update, SEA Ordinance and HMA Ordinance was continued to August 6, 2014, and the remainder of the General Plan Update was continued to July 23, 2014.

### **July 23, 2014 Public Hearing**

#### **Edits to the Draft General Plan**

At the sixth public hearing on July 23, 2014, staff provided an overview of the edits made to the January 2014 version of the Draft General Plan, based on comments provided by various stakeholders. Prior to the hearing, staff provided the Commission with a July 10 version of the Draft General Plan.

#### **CCAP**

Prior to the hearing, staff provided the Commission with a revised CCAP.

#### **Zoning Consistency**

On July 17, 2014, prior to the hearing, staff provided the Commission with an analysis of the draft MXD Zone.

#### **Discussion**

One individual testified at the hearing, and commented on the Transfer of Development Rights implementation program, and the need for more restrictions on development within Very High Fire Hazard Zones and stronger environmental policies.

The discussion focused on the relationship between land use density and minimum lot sizes, particularly in rural areas. The remainder of the General Plan Update was continued to August 27, 2014.

### **August 6, 2014 Public Hearing**

At the seventh public hearing on August 6, 2014, staff provided an overview of the revised HMA Ordinance and implementing guidelines, and the SEA Program and Ordinance.

### **HMA Ordinance**

Staff described revisions made based on stakeholder comments on the following sections: Definition, Permit Required, Conditions of Approval for Open Space Recordation, and Findings in the Ordinance; and Site Planning Section in the Guidelines. Staff also added language to clarify regulations as they relate to Community Standards Districts.

### **SEA Program and SEA Ordinance**

Staff focused on SEA boundaries, particularly the history of their development and the methodology used in mapping process. Staff presented that the SEA acreage increase is much less than what the maps convey, due to the applicability of the current SEA Ordinance. Regarding public requests received for SEA boundary changes, staff explained that boundaries have been adjusted or added to the SEA Development Map if the requests met certain criteria.

### **Discussion**

Fourteen individuals testified at the hearing. The majority expressed concerns over the SEA boundary changes and their impact on land development, particularly mining operations. Four people indicated that the public hearing for the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update should proceed before the General Plan Update. Other concerns raised include a need for SEA Ordinance revisions to address density, site design, and permit process; and incorporating the impact of global warming on biological resources.

Staff was asked to keep stakeholders apprised of updates on the SEA Program and Ordinance. The discussion on the SEA Program Update, SEA Ordinance and HMA Ordinance was continued to August 27, 2014.

### **August 27, 2014 Public Hearing**

The August 27, 2014 public hearing was canceled, and the entirety of the General Plan Update was continued to October 8, 2014.

### **October 8, 2014 Public Hearing**

#### **SEA Program**

At the ninth public hearing on October 8, 2014, staff provided additional information on the status of the SEA Program Update, and recommended that the SEA Ordinance be taken off calendar from the rest of the General Plan Update to allow additional time to address stakeholders concerns regarding the SEA Ordinance, and to allow for more comprehensive community-level outreach.

#### **Discussion**

Thirteen individuals testified at the hearing. The majority spoke in opposition of the expansion of SEAs on mining properties, agricultural areas, and Economic Opportunity Areas proposed in the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update, and expressed concerns over the implementation of the SEA Ordinance. One individual spoke in support of the SEA Program, with recommendations to change the SEA Ordinance. Three individuals inquired about zoning consistency and the impact

on a specific property in Kinneloa Mesa. The SEA Ordinance was taken off calendar, and the remainder of the General Plan Update was continued to December 10, 2014.

## **ADDITIONAL EDITS/UPDATES**

A majority of the changes made to the Draft General Plan since the release of the July 10 redlined version are text edits and modifications to maps and figures to respond to stakeholder concerns and agency comments. Staff also added references to new legislation applicable to general plans (ie., SB 743 and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act); made revisions to the Planning Areas framework boundaries in response to La Crescenta-Montrose community input; revised and added policies in the Land Use Element to be consistent with Airport Land Use Commission policies; and made edits for consistency. The redlined edits are provided to you as an attachment of this staff memo. The following edits are highlighted for your reference:

### **Historic Preservation Ordinance**

As the Historic Preservation Ordinance is currently being considered by the Board of Supervisors, staff removed the Historic Preservation Ordinance from the General Plan Implementation Program.

### **Amendments to Title 22-Applicability**

Staff refined the language in *Chapter 2: Applicability* in the Draft General Plan and prepared corresponding zoning amendment language that allows applicants the option of having their applications or modifications to approvals reviewed for compliance under either the existing regulations, or under the new regulations if their applications are submitted prior to the effective date of the General Plan Update. The zoning amendment language is provided to you as an attachment of this staff memo.

### **Hillside Management Ordinance and Guidelines**

Staff revised the HMA Ordinance to include the Hillside Design Guidelines as an appendix to the Ordinance. Minor changes to the language of the Hillside Design Guidelines reflect its inclusion as an appendix to the Ordinance. Any changes to the Guidelines language in the future would require an amendment to Title 22. The revised Ordinance and guidelines are provided to you as an attachment to this staff memo.

### **Significant Ecological Areas Program**

As the SEA Ordinance was taken off calendar on October 8, staff added the SEA Ordinance to the Implementation Program. Staff also modified the SEA boundaries and descriptions to reflect RPC and Board actions for the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update.

### **Antelope Valley Area Plan Update**

On September 27, 2014, your Commission recommended the approval of the Antelope Valley Area Plan Update project, which was followed by the Board of Supervisors' intent to approve the project on November 12, 2014. The scope of Antelope Valley Area Plan Update includes concurrent amendments to the 1980 General Plan and Title 22 as applicable to the Antelope Valley Planning Area. These include the expansion of SEA boundaries, amendments to SEA descriptions, the addition of Agricultural Resource Areas, amendments to the Highway Plan, and updates to the Regional Trails Map. Also included are the amendments to Title 22 to add

the new Rural Commercial (C-RU) and Rural Mixed-Use (MXD-RU) Zones. Therefore, these changes are now incorporated by reference as part of the General Plan Update.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

A Draft EIR was circulated for public review and comments from June 23, 2014 to August 7, 2014 pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reporting requirements. The Draft EIR was mailed to more than 350 stakeholder individuals and organizations, emailed to more than 1,900 addresses, and made available at County libraries. The notice of completion and availability was published in the Los Angeles Times on June 23, 2014.

The County received 23 comment letters and incorporated them into the Final EIR. The Final EIR contains a summary of the potential environmental effects of the General Plan Update, the recommended mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid those effects, and the level of significance after mitigation. Implementation of the mitigation measures, as detailed in each environmental analysis section presented in the EIR, would reduce most of the potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level. However, even with the implementation of the mitigation measures, the General Plan Update would result in significant and unavoidable impacts for the following: agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, mineral resources, noise, transportation/traffic, and utilities and service systems.

The Draft and Final EIR is included as an attachment of this staff memo.

## **COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since the Draft General Plan was made available for public review on January 23, 2014, the Department has received 190 written comments to date. In addition, since the February 26, 2014 public hearing, 54 individuals and representatives of stakeholder groups have testified to date. Staff has updated the Commission's comment matrix,<sup>2</sup> which can be found on the Department's General Plan Update webpage.<sup>3</sup> As of the date of this staff memo, all comments have been considered.

## **NOTIFICATION**

A notice of public hearing and availability of the General Plan Update was mailed in mid-January 2014. The notice was prepared and distributed pursuant to Section 22.60.174 of the County Code. Notices were mailed to more than 40,000 property owners whose parcels are located in General Plan major policy areas. Notices were also distributed to more than 3,000 stakeholder individuals and organizations, and emailed to more than 1,200 addresses. Furthermore, the Draft General Plan was made available on the DRP web site, in all County libraries, DRP field offices and other locations. The notice was also published in 16 newspapers, including one Spanish language newspaper, of general circulation in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County between January 23, 2014 and January 27, 2014.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan/comments2014>

<sup>3</sup> <http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan/draft2014>

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The following recommendation is made prior to the public hearing and is subject to change based upon testimony and/or documentary evidence presented at the public hearing: Staff recommends the Regional Planning Commission close the public hearing, and adopt the EIR (Environmental Assessment No. 201100109 Environmental Impact Report State Clearinghouse Number 2011081042), adopt the CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and adopt a resolution recommending approval to the Board of Supervisors of Project No. 02-305.

**I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING, AND ADOPT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. 201100046 STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2011081042) PREPARED FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROJECT NO. 02-305 PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT, ADOPT THE CEQA FINDINGS OF FACT AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS, AND ADOPT THE MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM.**

**I MOVE THAT THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ADOPT THE RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROJECT NO. 02-305.**

Should you have any questions, please contact Soyeon Choi at (213) 974-6417 or [schoi@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:schoi@planning.lacounty.gov).

### Attachments:

1. Revised Draft General Plan and Appendices, November 25, 2014 (CD)
2. General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (CD)
3. Hillside Management Ordinance and Guidelines, December 2014
4. Amendments to Title 22 Regarding Applicability
5. Draft Resolution of the Regional Planning Commission

MC:CC:SC